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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Infrastructures for Change: Transnational Organizations, 1953-1993**

Kathryn Sikkink and Jackie Smith

It is now common in the literature on transnational social movements and networks to assert that they have expanded dramatically in recent years. But few researchers have provided strong quantitative evidence or analysis of this growth and its relevance for transnational movements and networks. Researchers have shown significant growth in international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) of all types, but only a small portion of these organizations are engaged in the kinds of social change activities typical of social movements and networks.<sup>1</sup> Jackie Smith presented clear evidence of the growth of INGOs established for the explicit purpose of promoting social or political change. Drawing from the Yearbook of International Organizations for the years 1983, 1988, and 1993, Smith examined the population of what she labeled "transnational social movement organizations," or "TSMOs," demonstrating their parallels with research on national social movements.<sup>2</sup> This chapter presents the results of

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Skjelsbaek (1971).

<sup>2</sup> For other discussions of the population of transnational social movement organizations,

an expanded collaborative effort at data collection and coding from the Yearbook, using Smith's coding procedures, to include the years 1953, 1963, and 1973.<sup>3</sup> This long-term perspective can offer insights about the nature of the subset of INGOs working across national borders to promote social and political change, and it can tell us about change in this sector over time. This allows us to relate the arguments made in this book derived from case studies of particular transnational social change efforts to a broader understanding of the organizations that help comprise such movements.

We cannot measure the growth of transnational movements and networks using the definition presented in the introduction, because there is no source that systematically documents such organizations and networks. Accounting for the extent of contemporary transnational networks would prove a time-consuming and difficult task, given the informal and fluid nature of these networks. As a proxy for such a measure, however, we use the changing number and characteristics of international non-governmental organizations that are explicitly devoted to social and political change goals. For consistency with other chapters and research, we refer to the organizations we examine as "social change INGOs." A subset of INGOs whose organizational missions involve the promotion of some form of social and/or political change, these organizations serve as social infrastructures for change, and they represent more or less routine efforts to generate resources and collective action for social change efforts. Moreover,

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see Smith (1995; 1997a; and 1999). Discussions of the applications of sociological research on social movements for the study of international NGOs, see Smith, Pagnucco and Chatfield (1997) and Smith (2000).

<sup>3</sup> As far as we are aware, this data set spanning 50 years is the only effort to provide quantitative historical data on social change INGOs from the same source.

they provide opportunities for individuals to participate in international politics in ways that otherwise would be impossible. International organizations and their member states provide few formal channels of access to international policy making arenas. But transnational social change organizations have worked to expand citizens' access to the global polity by creating structures that convey information and ideas between individuals and groups within societies and the institutions that structure inter-state relations (see, e.g., Smith 1997x). We can therefore expect these particular actors — in contrast to actors whose principal objectives, instructions, or routines lie outside the sphere of social change work — to be *routine*, though by no means the *only*, participants in transnational advocacy networks and transnational social movements. Understanding the nature of this organizational infrastructure can help us anticipate the issue arenas most likely to attract transnational advocacy efforts.

As we know from work on the precursors to modern transnational social movements and networks, including the chapter by August Nimtz in this volume, transnational social movements are not a new phenomena.<sup>4</sup> We find numerous early examples including the transnational campaign against slavery, transnational labor organizing, and campaigns for women's suffrage. The oldest social change INGO in the Yearbook's current listing, the Anti-Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights, was founded in 1839. The International Working Man's Association (1864-1872), discussed by August Nimtz, although short-lived, was the forerunner of diverse networks, movements, and political parties. Other early social change INGOs include the World Woman's Christian Temperance Union (1883), the World Zionist Organization (1897), and the International Bureau for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons (1899).

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<sup>4</sup> Also Keck and Sikkink (1998); Chatfield (1997).

Nevertheless, the vast majority of social change INGOs emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century, and our data suggest that their number and size, and the density and complexity of international linkages have grown dramatically in the last three decades. More than sixty percent of all social change INGOs active in 1993 were formed after 1970. This is consistent with the material from our case chapters, where many of the organizations in the networks we discuss were formed in the 1970s and 1980s.

### **Data**

The Union of International Associations (UAI), based in Brussels, produces an account of international nongovernmental organizations as part of its annual Yearbook of International Organizations, published since 1950.<sup>5</sup> International organization scholars have long referred to the Yearbook to document trends in international organization and international non-governmental activity.<sup>6</sup> The Union of International Associations was commissioned by a United Nations Resolution to keep track of international organizations, which it does by consulting relevant U.N. records, and by seeking out information directly from INGOs

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<sup>5</sup> The data in the Yearbook is the most complete census of international organizations, which included information of organizations' founding dates, goals, memberships, and interorganizational ties. The Union on international Organizations uses UN records on non-governmental organizations (NGOs), self-reports, referrals, and the media to identify organizations and compile organizational profiles for the Yearbook. Editors consistently check this reported information against other sources, such as periodicals, official documents, and the media. We have confidence in this data because it has been gathered by the same organization using the same methods over time. Nevertheless, some of the increases we see in the total numbers of social change INGOs may be the result of more complete methods of identifying and surveying international non-governmental organizations in the current period.

<sup>6</sup> See Skjelsbaek (1971); also Jacobson (1979): Appendix B, 435-439.

themselves. The Yearbook is the only source of systematic annual data on International NGOs.

For scholars and activists interested in social movements or networks, however, the Yearbook data poses some problems. The Yearbook only collects information about *international* non-governmental organizations, and they use a quite stringent criteria to determine if an organization is international. Members, officers, voting, and substantial budgetary contributions have to come from at least three countries for the organizations to be included. This creates a list of formal and bureaucratized INGOs. But many of the organizations that scholars and activists would consider transnational social movements or networks would not be listed in the Yearbook. The Yearbook only lists those organizations that are formally international, not all networks with substantial, but informal international linkages. Moreover, the groups most likely to respond to the UAI's census survey are those that wish to have information about their group made public. This would likely exclude groups working for political and social change that is seen as illegitimate as well as groups using illicit means to advance their change goals. Thus any data set based on information from the Yearbook will underestimate the absolute number of transnational social movement organizations. This suggests that data from the Yearbook can provide only a partial picture of transnational network sectors. Nevertheless, the dynamics and patterns of this particular subset of formally organized actors may be helpful to help us understand general patterns in transnational networks.

Secondly, and perhaps more troubling for the social movement theorist, the Yearbook does not distinguish between different types of international non-governmental organizations. It lumps together in a single INGO category all different types of international NGOs from

international professional organizations, like the International Political Science Association (IPSA), or international medical associations, with what we would call more genuine social movements or networks. Smith overcame this problem by drawing from sociological research on social movement organizations to introduce a "political or social change" criteria in her coding scheme. Coders identified organizations whose specified goals (or "aims" under Yearbook headings) indicated that their principal purpose is to work for some form of social or political change.<sup>7</sup> It is this social change subgroup that we refer to as social change INGOs. Coders also excluded the following types of organizations outright: funds, foundations, institutes or organizations primarily devoted to research, groups that seek world peace through spiritual transformation (eg., Yoga, Transcendental Meditation), organizations whose primary mission is the promotion of a particular religious tradition, exchange programs, service delivery and general education organizations. In addition, because the Yearbook did not indicate whether they were autonomous from government control, labor organizations were excluded from the data set. However, labor organizations working principally on worker's rights and protection from forced labor were included, since their social change emphasis was more apparent. Religious organizations were excluded, except when their *principal* organizational focus went beyond the propagation of a particular religious ideology to include the promotion of social or political change. The idea here is that churches and other religious institutions – while frequently supportive actors within transnational social movements – have organizational missions that are not primarily for the promotion of social change, and thus their work towards movement goals may vary substantially across time and place.

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<sup>7</sup> For more details on coding, see Smith (1995).

These distinctions were necessary to exclude the large number of INGOs that do not fit our definition of transnational social movements in any sense. Nevertheless, these criteria do exclude some organizations which are critical part of some of the networks in this volume. For example, the coding scheme excluded groups whose primary aim is the promotion of religion, yet in her chapter on the debt network, Elizabeth Donnelly describes the significant activity of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, including the Pope himself, on behalf of debt forgiveness. Though not formally a part of the debt networks, the Catholic Church and Catholic Bishops were some of the most active and influential actors on these issues. Likewise in the chapter on Chile, Darren Hawkins argues that international church organizations, like the World Council of Churches, played a crucial role in the human rights network on Chile, but the WCC is not in our list of INGOs whose specific purpose is promoting social change. In addition, funds and foundations are excluded from the data base, and yet most of the chapters in the volume point to the extremely important role that some funds and foundations played in supporting transnational social movement and network activity. Some of the transnational labor networks discussed by Kidder and Ritchie would not appear in our data base because they are listed primarily as labor unions. Finally, sometimes parts of a government became members of a transnational network, as in Daniel Thomas' discussion of the Helsinki network, where the Congressional Helsinki Commission, and even Ambassador Goldberg himself often seemed to be more identified with transnational network principles than U.S. government policy, and eventually succeeded in changing U.S. policy to bring it in line with network goals.

Given these problems, we emphasize that what we present here is a look at the population of international non-governmental *organizations* with social and/or political change

aims, rather than a comprehensive portrait of transnational social *movements* or *networks* discussed in the empirical chapters of this book. Nevertheless, since organizations are major components of movements and networks, many of the specific transnational organizations mentioned in the book chapters appear in this data set as well.

In addition to analyzing the trends in the growth of social change INGOs, we examine the data in light of some of the hypotheses proposed in the volume. Authors in the volume make a series of arguments about the explanations for the growth and effectiveness of networks in their issue area. Many of these arguments have to do with the impact of international institutions, including international norms, on social movement activity.<sup>8</sup> More specifically, as noted in the introduction, authors discuss how specific aspects of international institutions, or international opportunity structures, facilitate the growth and effectiveness of networks. For example, a number of authors argue that issue areas where pre-existing well institutionalized norms exist are more likely to lead to network growth and successful network action. For example, Darren Hawkins argues in his chapter on Chile: "Domestic and international human rights norms facilitated the emergence and growth of the network.... These pre-existing norms strengthened the network and made it more successful."

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<sup>8</sup> See Tarrow (1999).



This raises the question of what exactly we mean by norms, and how we know a norm when we see one. In the introduction we stressed that although international norms are manifest in complex ways, for many research purposes it is possible to operationalize international norms using international treaties, or declarations or "soft law" such as the Helsinki Final Act. Looking at the entry into force of a treaty as a threshold in norm institutionalization may provide a starting place for talking about the influence of norms on the growth of network and network success. In this chapter we will briefly look at the relevant treaties in a handful of issue areas and discuss whether there is any apparent relation between treaty ratification and social change INGO growth. In some cases, we also need to look at "soft law". For example, Daniel Thomas suggests that the pre-existing Helsinki norms were essential for the mobilization and strength of that network, and yet Helsinki was not a treaty, but rather soft law. In any case, both Hawkins and Thomas argue that norms legitimate the work of change advocates operating in networks and/or movements and thereby encourage network growth and success.<sup>9</sup> We shall briefly explore this in relation to available data.

In the case of human rights, such an argument would suggest that network growth would occur after the mid-1970s, because both the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights entered into force in 1976. Some regional human rights treaties and law also date to this period: the Helsinki Final Act was passed in 1975, and the American Convention on Human Rights entered into force in 1978. In the women's rights area, this argument would anticipate social change INGO expansion after 1981, when

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<sup>9</sup>Transnational movements and networks have also been catalysts behind the establishment and elaboration of international norms (see, e.g., Risse-Kappen 1994; Finnemore 1996; Chatfield 1997).

CEDAW entered into force. The environmental area is more difficult to evaluate because there is not a single treaty, but a multiple set of specific treaties. Some issue areas we deal with in the volume -- for example the area of debt forgiveness -- have virtually no strong pre-existing or institutionalized treaty norms. If institutionalized norms lead to the growth of networks, we would expect slight growth of social change INGOs in this issue area. Elizabeth Donnelly points out that the Catholic Church has a "jubilee" tradition of periodic debt forgiveness, but this has not been translated into any international treaties. Likewise, in other areas, such as development, Paul Nelson suggests that multiple and contradictory norms exist, some stressing economic rights and basic needs, and others stressing fiscal austerity and the need to balance budgets.

A second hypothesis is that large international conferences created the impetus for network growth. In the area of women's rights, this would lead us to expect that the large U.N. conferences associated with International Women's Year in 1975, and International Women's Decade (1975-1985) would lead to the growth of networks and movements. In the environmental area, it suggests we would see network growth after the 1972 Conference in Stockholm, and UNCED in 1992 Rio de Janeiro. Likewise, we might expect human rights network growth in response to the 1968 International Conference on Human Rights in Tehran, and the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.<sup>10</sup>

### **Growth in the Number of Social Change INGOs**

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<sup>10</sup> On NGOs at these meetings, see Clark, Friedman, and Hochstetler (1998).

The data support the general view presented in this book and elsewhere that there has been a significant increase in the total number of international non-governmental organizations. The total number of social change INGOs listed in the Yearbook increased almost six times between 1953 and 1993. The growth has been particularly dramatic in the ten year period from 1983-1993. (See Figure 1)

[FIGURE ONE ABOUT HERE]

### **Types of issues around which social change INGOs organize**

The data also tell us about the kinds of issues around which social change INGOs organize, and how this has changed over time. The story here is both one of some remarkable stability in issues, and some significant changes. Figure 1 shows that the number of social change INGOs has increased across all issues, though to varying degrees in different issue areas.

This variance across issue areas suggests that social change INGO growth is not just an epiphenomena of more generalized growth of organizations internationally. The number of social change INGOs working on some issues has increased dramatically, while those working on other issues has stagnated, and in a relative sense, declined.

Human rights has been a predominant focus of transnational social change organizations since the 1950s. The issue has been the focus of roughly a quarter of all groups in each decade studied. There were five times as many organizations working primarily on human rights in 1993 as there were in 1953, but human rights groups are about the same proportion of total groups in 1993 as they were in 1953. The number of groups focusing on human rights has

grown in each period, although the issue areas declined proportionally in the 1973 and 1983 period, only to recover again by 1993.

Two of the chapters in this volume focus on these human rights organizations, the chapter on Chile by Darren Hawkins, and the chapter on U.S. policy towards Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, by Daniel Thomas. Both Hawkins and Thomas argue that these networks were relatively more effective because they could identify their case with well institutionalized international norms. The United Nations General Assembly passed the first clear statement of international human rights norms, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 1948. The relatively large numbers of human rights INGOs in 1953 could reflect this early declaration on emergent international norms. Indeed, some human rights groups' efforts to press for rights protections in the wake of World War II's atrocities were critical to achieving the Universal Declaration. These norms became increasingly detailed and institutionalized in 1976, when the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights entered into force, and in 1975 when the Helsinki Final Act was signed. The data on the number of human rights INGOs or their proportion of total social change INGOs, however, does not show a significant immediate effect of the increasing institutionalization of international norms, since the issue declined proportionally in the 1973 and 1983 period. Nor does the first international human rights conference in Tehran in 1968 appear to have an impact on leading to an important increase in the number of social change INGOs. This may result from the fact that a substantial number of transnational human rights organizations were already in existence, and they might have been able to take on the new adherents and tasks associated with the world conference. The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, in 1993, however, did

coincide with an increase in both the absolute number of human rights INGOs and in their proportion of all social change INGOs. This might be explained by the convergence of this conference with the end of the Cold War and the subsequent expansion of the global agenda to include issues and voices that had been excluded in the bipolar struggle that had dominated global affairs.

The second largest proportion of social change INGOs active in 1953 worked to promote the development of international law and institutions. These organizations made up 13% of the population in 1953 through 1973, but by 1983 its numbers remained steady as the total number of social change INGOs grew. By 1993, this issue focus accounted for only 4% of all organizations. This does not mean that international law has become an irrelevant concern for these organizations. Many international human rights, women's rights, and increasingly, environmental organizations pay significant attention to international law, but they do so from the vantage point of their particular issue. It is likely that the growth in the amount and complexity of international law and international institutions in the post war period have made general purpose international law and institutions INGOs less viable as they compete with other, more focused groups for funding and other resources.<sup>11</sup> None of the chapters in this volume focus on transnational movements or networks dedicated to promote the development of international law or institutions. Indeed, as Paul Nelson's chapter on the World Bank, Elizabeth

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<sup>11</sup>Many private and government funders require groups seeking resources to propose specific projects. This may help explain the pattern we find, as organizers are encouraged to specialize their groups' work around key issue areas or legal/institutional arenas, such as the Human Rights Sub-Commission or the Commission on Sustainable Development. Also, during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of United Nations functional agencies and treaty bodies grew tremendously, enabling more specialized work in very focused arenas.

Donnelly's chapter on the International Monetary Fund, and Mark Ritchie's comments about campaigns against NAFTA and the WTO point out, today's transnational social movements are more likely to critique the practices of international institutions than they are to promote their development. It is interesting to note that there were no major attempts to write treaties or hold conferences to institutionalize or deal with general norms about international law or international institutions.

Groups working on women's rights accounted for about nine percent of all groups in 1953 and in 1993. Like human rights, the women's right issue area declined proportionally in the 1973 and 1983 period, only to recover again by 1993. This is somewhat surprising, because as Karen Brown Thompson points out in Chapter five, histories of the international women's movement have signaled the U.N. International Women's Year in 1975, and U.N. International women's decade (1975-1985) as a major growth period for international women's rights NGOs. Likewise the early 1980s saw the emergence for the first time of clear treaty norms on women's rights. The Convention on the Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979, and entered into force in ----. Yet, despite all this activity around norms and conferences, 1983 was the year when the women's right issue accounted for the lowest proportion of the total groups since 1953 (7.2%). In some cases there appears to be a significant lag time between the founding of organizations and their appearance in the Yearbook. So, for example, the parallel NGO meeting at the International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City in 1975 encouraged a group of women to found the International Women's Tribune Center, which used the mailing list generated at Mexico City to keep in touch with individuals and groups around the globe. By 1990, the Tribune Center was a communication link for

16,000 individuals and groups working on behalf of women in 160 countries. The Tribune Center, though founded in the mid 1970s, does not show up on the Yearbook list until 1993. We do not know whether this lag is more characteristic of women's groups than other groups. It could be that the feminist movements that came to the forefront in the 1970s and 1980s, which eschewed hierarchical forms of organization, avoided setting up the kind of formal international groups that met the Yearbook criteria. In general, it appears that the full effect of the Women's Decade from 1976-1985 may not have been reflected in the data until the 1993 Yearbook.

Transnational environmental organizations have grown most dramatically in absolute and relative terms. In 1953, only two organizations worked to promote environmental change. By 1973, the year following the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, their number rose to 10, and it more than tripled between 1983 and 1993, the year following the Earth Summit, or the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio. This growth supports Khagram's point in chapter.... that the Stockholm conference in 1972 contributed the growth of international networks.

Proportionally, environmental INGOs rose from 1.8 percent of total groups in 1953 to 14.3 percent in 1993. Forty two percent of all environmental INGOs active in 1993 were formed after 1985, and 80% were formed after 1970. Some of this growth might be the result (or even the partial cause) of UN meetings on the environment in 1972 and 1992.<sup>12</sup> This dramatic growth parallels the expansion of national and locally based environmental movements. If this is the case, it is perhaps not surprising that some of the more successful social movement and network activity discussed in chapter in this volume, such as the Anti-dam

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<sup>12</sup> See Willetts (1999).

transnational social movements discussed in the chapter by Sanjeev Khagram, and the more general movements pressuring the World Bank to consider the environmental impact of major infrastructural projects, discussed by Paul Nelson in Chapter.... are linked to international environmental activism.

The percentage share of groups in the development issue area has also grown (from 2.7% in 1953 to 5.4% in 1993) but not at all as dramatically as the growth in the environmental issue area. Groups focusing on development still account for a relatively small percentage of the social change INGOs recorded in this data set.<sup>13</sup> Of the chapters in this volume, Paul Nelson's discussion of the poverty and structural adjustment networks, and Elizabeth Donnelly's discussion of the debt networks are the groups most engaged in the development issue area. Some of the major development NGOs (such as Church World Service, Community Aid Abroad, CARE, Christian Aid, Oxfam International, Save the Children Federation, and World Vision International) not only advocate policy positions but also carry out significant development projects on their own. To carry out these projects, they may seek funding from the very institutions they are pressuring for policy changes. Paul Nelson suggests that this creates tensions within some major development NGOs between "their desire to advocate for new policy and practice" and "their dominant organizational need to secure funding from major aid donors."

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<sup>13</sup> Many of the larger international relief organizations that would be considered important players in transnational networks (e.g., CARE) are excluded from this data set because they either are not international in structure or because their organizational missions are focused more on relief or charity than on social change.



Other groups that might be considered "development" organizations have found that they are more effective if they "frame" their demands in human rights or environmental terms. Thus a number of the organizations discussed by Jim Riker, Sanjeev Khagram, Paul Nelson, and Thalia Kidder might be characterized as "development" NGOs but also frequently use the frames of the environment, or human rights (and workers rights in the case of labor networks) because they have found that these frames have more resonance than the development frame. This can be seen as examples of strategic venue shift, as activists frame issues in certain ways in the search for more support and a more receptive political venue.<sup>14</sup> Even more far reaching than simple venue shift is what Sanjeev Khagram describes, when new norms on indigenous peoples, human rights, and the environment have "reconstituted extant understandings and meanings of development."

The percentage share of groups in such issue areas as peace, ethnic unity, and Esperanto, has declined. None of the chapters in this volume look at international organizing in these issue areas. To the initial U.S. observer, the inclusion of Esperanto organizations as social change INGOs, and the high number of Esperanto organizations in our data base may seem puzzling. But for many internationalists around the world, the desire to learn a "world language" such as Esperanto, was an expression of a desire for an international identity that transcended their national identities. In parts of the world where more explicit international political activity was limited, Esperanto organizations became the depository of internationalist norms and aspirations, and an opportunity to join together with organizations elsewhere. These organizations were frequently organized along the lines of occupation or interest/ identity, so we find such

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<sup>14</sup> Baumgartner and Jones (1991); Keck and Sikkink (1998).

organizations as the International Federation of Esperantist Railwaymen, the League of Homosexual Esperantists, and the World Esperantist Vegetarian Association. None of the chapters in this volume examine such organizations, but the steady presence of such international language organizations in our data set provide support for the argument we present in the conclusions that transnational social movements and networks are harbingers to the emergence of international identities that co-exist with, and in some cases transcend national identities.<sup>15</sup>

Although the networks discussed in this book represent only a subset of the total number of networks, these include the issue areas around which the largest number of social change INGOs have organized, and/or that are experiencing greatest growth currently. Together, groups working on human rights, women's rights, environment, and development, account for well over half of total social movement and network activity. As pointed out above, many labor organizations have not been included in the data set. In summary, the issues dealt with in this volume are not an usual or marginal form of social movement activity, but a sample of the most important issues to which the majority of modern social change INGOs devote themselves.

Finally, although coders of the data set were obliged to choose the "major focus" of an organization, in the cases in this book, many social movements and campaigns work simultaneously on a number of different issues, or work on issues that are at the intersection of issue areas. This may be increasingly true as economic and political globalization make the connections among issues more obvious, as with the NAFTA and WTO effects on environmental and human rights concerns. Perhaps the clearest example of this is Sanjeev Khagram's chapter

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<sup>15</sup>For a more detailed discussion of Esperanto groups, see Kim (1999).

on the Narmada Dam campaign, where activists worked on issues involving the protection of indigenous or tribal people, human rights, environmental preservation, and development. Paul Nelson also points to the overlapping of the three networks he examines on poverty, the environment, and structural adjustment, focused on the World Bank.

### **Geographic dispersion of social change INGOs, and networks**

One common criticism of transnational social movements and networks is that they tend to be disproportionately based in the countries of the North. Critics claim that this physical location in the most developed countries had led these social change INGOs to reflect primarily the sensibilities of citizens or governments in the developed world.

Our data supports the general understanding that the great bulk of social change INGOs are based in the developed world, and primarily have the branch offices and membership from the North. (See Tables 2 and 3). This is the closest indicator in the data set to what we have referred to as "asymmetries" of power and influence within the networks and transnational social movements. Of course physical location of an INGO is only one possible indicator of point of view held by networks members. Hosting the secretariat of an international NGO is a costly and administratively complex operation. There are examples of efforts made to locate Secretariats of social change INGOs in Southern countries that failed because southern NGOs were hesitant to take on the large financial and administrative burden of serving as the Secretariat.

[TABLE 1: REGIONS, ABOUT HERE]

[TABLE 2: LOCATION OF SECRETARIAT, ABOUT HERE]

Another explanation for the geographic distribution of social change INGO headquarters is that it makes practical sense for these groups to base their organizational operations located near the political targets they seek to influence. Location in sites near international organizations facilitates access to information on international negotiations, and it enables organizational staff to monitor negotiations, lobby government delegations and members of IO secretariats, and to otherwise facilitate communications between geographically dispersed memberships and global institutions. Thus, it is not surprising that we found some of the largest concentrations of social change INGOs near major IGO headquarters in the cities of Brussels and Geneva. This pattern holds throughout the time periods we examine. Another consideration is that a transnational organization is likely to choose a site for the international secretariat with which dispersed members can readily communicate -- electronically, by telephone, or in person. Cities with good physical infrastructures and frequent non-stop airline service facilitate global networking and thus make logical candidates for headquarter siting. Figure two shows the percentage of groups whose headquarters were located in one of four key cities of Europe, ones which are among what Sassen calls "global cities," or centers of commercial and professional activity which enjoy high concentrations of specialized service industries and supportive infrastructures (e.g., telecommunications and transportation) which reinforce their centrality as a global center.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Sassen (1991). Unfortunately, we were not asking this question when we recorded

## FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Despite the over-representation of developed countries among social change INGO memberships and among the secretariat headquarters, these data show a trend over the past forty years away from this predominance of Northern and European representation and towards more geographically dispersed membership. Developing areas are somewhat better represented among the memberships of social change INGOs today than they were in the past. Of the developing areas, Latin Americans and Asians are most networked with social change INGOs, with Africans running a close third. While Europeans are most likely to have memberships with social change INGOs, their relative proportions have declined somewhat (from 92% in 1953 to 84% in 1993), reflecting the more rapid growth in participation from other regions. The proportion of social change INGOs reporting members in the U.S. and Canada remained fairly constant at around 70%. Middle Eastern countries were least likely to have representation in social change INGOs in most years of the study. Participation in the sector by Eastern European and former Soviet countries was generally low, although it expanded between 1983 and 1993, and may continue to grow as the Cold War recedes further into history. Much more dramatic is the decline in the percentage of social change INGOs based in global cities from more than half of all groups in 1953 to roughly one quarter of all groups in 1993. While the absolute numbers

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information on these groups, and we did not code separate cities within the United States. However, we are certain that a substantial portion -- if not a majority -- of these groups are located in New York or Washington DC, for the reasons outlined above.

of groups based in global cities has grown, these groups represent a smaller proportion of the transnational social movement sector than they once did.

With this shift in membership, the location of social change INGO secretariats has also shifted to reflect greater participation from developing countries. While only 5% of all secretariats were based in developing countries in 1953, this figure rose to 23% by 1993. Of these, nearly one fourth were in Latin America. To a certain extent, modern communication technologies have made secretariat location a less constraining issue than it once was, because all network members can receive information rapidly through electronic mail. Nevertheless, the kinds of geographic concentration shown in the data set was also present in the case studies. Both Paul Nelson and Elizabeth Donnelly, writing respectively on network pressures on the World Bank and the IMF, report that groups based in Washington, D.C. have had disproportionate influence in campaigns. This led in turn to complaints that the Washington based activists were not more representative or accountable, but had more influence because they had "loud voices and resources". Likewise, the close cooperation between some networks, especially environmental and human rights networks, and the U.S. government strengthens the perception that networks are guided by an "essentially Northern agenda". (Nelson,p.) When the World Bank's set up the standing NGO-World Bank Committee it attempted to circumvent the advantages of geographical concentration by mandating representation from each of the five major global regions. Other southern based networks have proposed establishing their own Washington office, but the chapters provide only one example where such an office has been created (FAVDO, cited in Nelson, p.)

The Yearbook does not provide significant data on the financial resources of

organizations. We suspect that such data would suggest that the process of geographic dispersal of membership and of secretariats has not been accompanied by substantial dispersal of the sources of funding for social change INGOs. Many of the authors in this volume point to the problems that funding creates for their movements, which suggests that asymmetries in transnational networks and movements is more a result of concentration of funding sources than location of secretariats.

U.S. and European foundations increasingly provide very significant financial support for social change INGOs, including those based in and drawing their membership from the developing world. Funding from international organizations and agencies is also an increasingly important source of funding. Not surprisingly, financial difficulties were by far the most significant obstacle reported by Southern (and Northern) groups in both a recent survey of transnational human rights groups and of affiliates of EarthAction, a large transnational organization working for environment, peace, and human rights.<sup>17</sup> However, most groups (in both surveys) still report that a substantial portion (approximately half of operational budgets, on average) of their funding is raised from internal sources such as dues or fees paid for services or materials.

Despite this concentration in the developed world, and the great dependence on financing from U.S. and European foundations, it is interesting to note that the issues around which social change INGOs organize do not simply reflect the issues that are most prominent in domestic social movement organizations in Western countries. For instance, while human rights is the most predominant issue for social change INGOs, human rights organizations are a relatively

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<sup>17</sup> Smith, Pagnucco, and Lopez (1998); Smith (1999).

small part of the social movement sector in western countries. Likewise, women's organizations are important both domestically and internationally, but the issue they focus on differ.<sup>18</sup>

**Network Density: Number of Country Members, Linkages among social change INGOs, and between social change INGOs and IGOs**

The introduction to this volume has argued that to understand transnational social movement activity, one must not only look at single social change INGOs or social movements, but we need to examine campaigns organized by loosely affiliated networks, coalitions, or movements. In general, we and others have argued, denser networks and coalitions are likely to be more effective in achieving their goals, especially if they have significant network, coalition, or movement participants within the country or countries targeted by the campaign. So, for example, Darren Hawkins argues that the density of the transnational networks working on human rights in Chile was an important part of the explanation for human rights change in that country. Especially important, however, was that social movement activity was often initiated and sustained by significant domestic human rights organizations within Chile and by networks of Chilean exiles working abroad.

The best measure of network scope and density one can glean from the Yearbook data are the numbers of countries reported among social change INGO membership, and their reported links with IGOs and other NGOs.

Table 3 shows that there has been some growth in the geographic expansion of social change INGO memberships. The number of groups reporting members in 25 or fewer countries remained fairly constant, at least between 1963 and 1993. But between 1953 and 1993, we see

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<sup>18</sup> Keck and Sikkink (1998).



some clear growth in the scope of social change INGOs, as the proportion of groups reporting fewer than 25 countries of membership declined from 68 to 55 % while the numbers reporting more than 40 membership countries grew from 15 to 28%. Of these 8% of the organizations now report members in more than 80 countries, up from 2% in 1953. The average number of countries of membership for all the social change INGOs in the data set increased from 26 in 1953 to 34 in 1993.

[TABLE 3: Geographic Dispersal of Members, ABOUT HERE]

Social change INGO contacts and formal relations with IGOs and NGOs remained constant between 1953 and 1983. By 1993, however, groups reporting any ties with other inter-governmental or nongovernmental organizations were more likely to have broader ranges of ties. The proportion of groups reporting having ties with more than three IGOs more than doubled from 17% in 1953 to 37% in 1993. The expansion of ties with NGOs is most dramatic after 1983. In 1983, 90% of the groups reporting any NGO ties said that they had fewer than four links to other NGOs. By 1993, only 53% of such groups had fewer than four links to other NGOs. The proportion of social change INGOs reporting links with four or more other NGOs grew nearly fivefold, from 10% in 1983 to 47% in 1993. This pattern clearly supports our claim that network density, especially among NGOs, has increased significantly. Also, we would argue that these figures still significantly underestimate the number of network links, since many informal ties exist, and these might not be reported on the UAI questionnaire that asks about

significant organizational contacts.

[TABLE 4: LINKS WITH NGOs and IGOS, ABOUT HERE]

Organizations were not asked to report on their funding links to foundations, nor on again kinds of linkages to governments, so the total number of networks linkages are not represented in the data set. A number of chapters suggest that informal linkages, based on personal trust and ties among individuals in different groups may be key linkages in some cases, but these would not be reported here.

### **Conclusions**

This chapter outlines the broad shifts in the organizational infrastructure that supports global social change efforts. While these organizations are not the only actors behind important global changes, the fact that their principal reason for existing is to promote some social or political change means that they are likely to be key figures that activate and sustain transnational advocacy networks. Unlike governments and foundations, these organizations are collections of individuals who care deeply about the social change goals of their organization and who spend large amounts of their time and energy working to promote these goals. Thus, understanding this infrastructure helps us better understand the changes in and potential for transnational networks.

The data we have analyzed suggest that the population of transnational social movement

organizations is both expanding numerically and in geographic scope. The number of organizations grew sixfold between 1953 and 1993. While there are still gaps between the participation of citizens of less industrialized countries and their Northern counterparts, this gap appears to be shrinking as more developing countries are represented among social change INGO memberships and as more social change INGOs locate their organizational headquarters outside of the global North and its global cities. These trends suggest that transnational advocacy work is more likely than it was in the past to incorporate more globally representative voices. They also suggest that such networks are more likely to be accounting for the needs and interests of people from regions outside the industrialized nations as they advocate for global change.

In addition to expanding size and scope of the transnational social movement infrastructure, we found a trend towards greater density in the linkages among social change INGOs and other actors such as other NGOs and international agencies. This reflects the success of past work by social change INGOs to defend and expand their access to IGOs and it demonstrates the extent to which these groups have become routine actors in international affairs. Moreover, it shows that through decades of work in the international system, social change advocates have learned to cultivate networks among themselves in order to facilitate the sharing of information and the coordination of strategies.

We did not find unambiguous support, however, for either of the two arguments about the impact of international institutions on the growth of social movement organizations. In none of the cases did the entry into effect of the relevant treaty appear to contribute to a significant increase in the number of social change INGOs. Pre-existing international norms do

seem important for the effectiveness of networks and movements, but they do not lead directly to the growth of movements. In some cases, such as the two environmental conferences, and the 1993 Human Rights Conference, large international conferences appear to contribute to the growth in the number of social change INGOs in the same issue area. In other issues, such as women's rights, and the 1968 Human rights conference, international conferences did not contribute to immediately growth in the number of social change INGOs organized on the issue.

In summary, parallel to the expansion of economic and political globalization, we find that nongovernmental actors have worked to expand and develop global social infrastructures. Seeking to shape the character of globalization and its policies are a larger number of more geographically diverse organizations with stronger and denser communications networks than were present at the founding of the United Nations. This sector of society has proved influential in shaping global changes in the past, and it is likely to continue to be a voice (however discordant) for principled change.